

# magonia



*H. Michael Simmons*

Once Upon a Time in the West  
or, the Mystery of the Aurora graveyard

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*Peter Rogerson*

Children of another God

*Peter Hough*

A Haunted Man

*Nigel Watson*

A Dream of Nuts and Bolts

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Letters \* Reviews \* Columns

## MAGONIA

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Magonia is an independent journal devoted to a broad examination of anomalous phenomena and their interaction with society and the individual. It is published independently by the Editors, and has no connection with any other magazine or group. Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily shared by the Editors.

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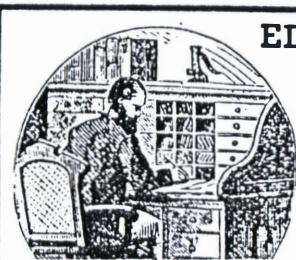
JOHN RIMMER

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Eagle-eyed readers will have noticed another change to our editorial team, above. Welcome to Luis Gonzales, who will be keeping us informed of UFO and other developments in Spain, and a change of role for Kevin McClure. Due to pressure of other commitments (notably the 'Better Days' magazine business, and work on his second book) Kevin is unable to be as active an Associate Editor as he would wish, instead he will act as an advisor and occasional contributor.

## Next Issue

Due to pressure of space, part two of Maurizio Verga's article, *Portrait of a Researcher*, has been held over to next issue. Magonia 21 will also feature Michael Goss's investigation of accounts of a living fossil, John Harney takes a critical look at a scientific hero, and a major UFO contact case is re-examined. Plus all the regular features and columns.



## EDITORIAL

## NOTES

IF our British readers will forgive me for saying so, as they squelch through their holidays in an incessant downpour, it's summer. And as we all know, that can only mean one thing. Most of us haven't seen the sun for weeks, but one reassuring aspect of the British summer can never fail. No matter how much we freeze and shiver, we know it's summer, because the circles are back!

Twitchers and other birdwatchers may realise that summer has arrived by the appearance of the Great Crested Wigeon. First cuckoo? Eat your heart out. We know that summer has arrived by the first sighting of the Great Downland Circles. All across southern England, dedicated watchers crouch in carefully disguised hides made of old UFO magazines in the hope of catching sight of the shy, furry, nocturnal creatures that make these mysterious markings. Using only the primitive implements they have to hand - a wooden stake and twenty-five feet of chain - they go through the instinctive rituals programmed into them by centuries of natural selection.

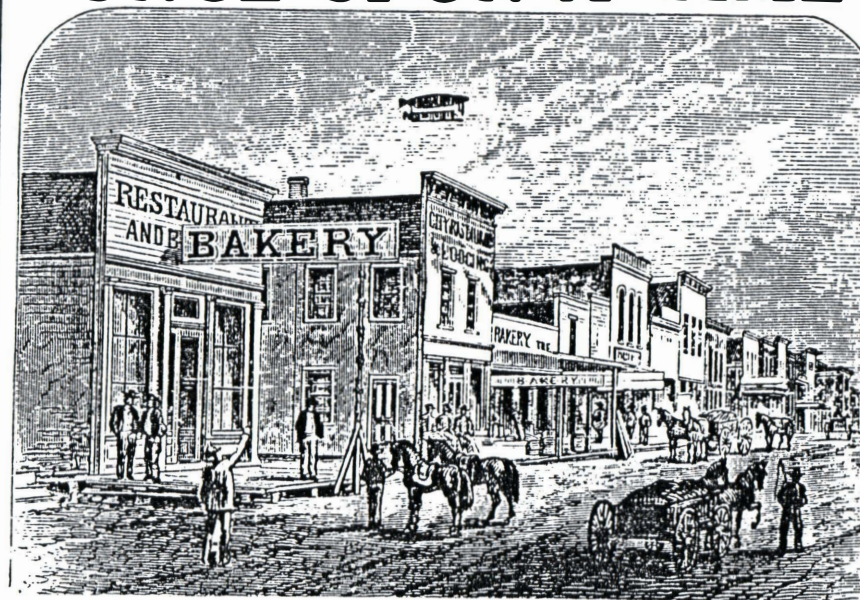
With the delicacy and grace of the mating ritual of the Warbling Cassowary, they crash their way through fields of cereal to leave their distinctive markings; one large circle in the middle, four smaller ones around it.

What is it for? Some naturalists say that it is part of an elaborate mating ceremony, the marks being to attract the even shyer and furrer female of the species. Others say the marks are themselves the result of the mating - but we will rapidly draw a veil over that suggestion!

But whatever the motivation it is surely enough to know that, year in and year out, this great tradition is maintained, and that no matter what else may be going on in this disturbing world around us we can rest secure in the knowledge that there will always be some thick, stupid wally prepared to make a total idiot of himself for the sole purpose of boring the rest of us stiff!

IN 1896 and 1897 people throughout the United States reported sightings of mysterious airships. First sighted on the seventeenth of November 1896 in Sacramento, the phenomenon soon appeared in the skies over other California cities. An eastward migration then carried it into Nebraska where reports steadily increased until the first months of 1897. At the end of March a series of spectacular appearances in Omaha, Kansas and Ohio signaled the outbreak of the mystery in the Midwest. Sightings spread rapidly. From Michigan to Texas the question of the day was "Have you seen the airship?"

## ONCE UPON A TIME



## IN THE WEST

Press coverage of the sightings varied. Generally the yellow press found the airship stories perfect grist for its circulation mills and printed the majority of reports. More conservative papers treated the reports with caution. The *New York Times* totally ignored the airship. Papers in sighting areas gave the reports fairer coverage, on the

## H. Michael Simmons

whole, than those at a distance. These latter tended to disregard the sightings or commented on the drinking habits of the populations of airship states. The Texas papers made great fun of the Kansas airship but where more circumspect when the mysterious aerial voyager crossed over into the Lone Star State.

Early reports of airship sightings in a particular area usually received more serious coverage than later reports, due to two factors. The early reports were usually simple accounts of the appearance of strange lights in the night sky, while later reports often contained detailed descriptions of the airship and elaborate accounts of encounters with mysterious aeronauts. Second, when airship sightings were first reported, editors and readers were more open to the possibility that an inventor had perfected one or more flying machines which were being tested in secret. As time went by and no inventor revealed a workable airship, press and public became more sceptical of the reported sightings. The press regarded elected public officials, clergymen and other eminent citizens as more reliable than railroadmen or labourers. Although newspapermen



were not always able to judge the veracity of a sighting, they did uncover a number of hoaxes and often added editorial comments to published reports giving the paper's opinion of the reliability of the accounts. This opinion was often based on the degree to which the description conformed to contemporary ideas of the potential design and performance capability of a flying machine.

The attitudes of competing newspapers towards reports helped determine a paper's treatment. For example, William Randolph Hurst's *San Francisco Examiner* discounted the stories of the airship carried by the competing *Call*, while Hurst's *New York Journal* gave them the sensational coverage which the other New York papers lacked.

In addition to the reportage of airship sightings, newspapers also published related stories. The public interest in the mysterious airship prompted the publication of informative articles on the history of aerial navigation, together with speculation on future developments. Articles appeared on the experiments of Langley, Lilienthal, Chanute, and other pioneers of aviation, often illustrated with sketches of proposed airship designs. Merchants capitalised on the popularity of airship stories by using airship themes in their newspaper advertisements, or even by claiming that the airship had been built especially to advertise their products. Political cartoonists used the airship to poke fun at politicians, while other cartoonists mocked the airships and those who reported them. Newspapers carried interviews with professors of astronomy who explained that the airship was only Venus, Mars, or a star. They also interviewed attorneys who claimed to represent the secret inventors. And not a few reporters invented their own airship sightings, producing imaginative journalistic hoaxes with a high degree of credibility.

First reported in Texas on 9th April 1897, by the middle of the month the airship was sighted throughout the northeastern section of the state. Wealthy Dallasites held evening lawn parties in the hope of seeing the mysterious visitor, and the *Dallas Morning Post* did its part to keep the airship flying. On the nineteenth of April it printed the following article on a page filled with airship stories:

**A WINDMILL  
DEMOLISHES IT**

Aurora, Wise Co., Tex., April 17 -- (To The News) -- About 6 o'clock this morning the early risers of Aurora were astonished at the sudden appearance of the airship which has been sailing through the country. It was travelling due north, and much

nearer the earth than ever before. Evidently some of the machinery was out of control, for it was making a speed of only ten or twelve miles an hour and gradually settling toward the earth. It sailed directly over the public square, and when it reached the north part of town collided with the tower of Judge Proctor's windmill and went to pieces with a terrific explosion, scattering debris over several acres of ground, wrecking the windmill and tower and destroying the judge's flower garden.

The pilot of the ship is supposed to have been the only one on board, and while his remains are badly disfigured, enough of the original has been picked up to show that he was not an inhabitant of this world.

Mt T. J. Weems, the United States signal service officer at this place and an authority on astronomy, gives it as his opinion that he was a native of the planet Mars.

Papers found on his person - evidently the record of his travels - are written in some unknown hieroglyphics, and can not be deciphered.

The ship was too badly wrecked to form any conclusion as to its construction or motive power. It was built of an unknown metal, resembling somewhat a mixture of aluminum and silver, and it must have weighed several tons.

The town is full of people to-day who are viewing the wreck and gathering specimens of the strange metal from the debris. The pilot's funeral will take place at noon to-morrow. S. E. HAYDON.

The story also reportedly appeared in the newsletter published in Aurora, but no copies of that publication are extant. No other newspaper carried the account or commented on it.

In the context of other airship reports the Aurora story is unique only in that it records the recovery of papers "written in some unknown hieroglyphics" and announces the funeral of an extraterrestrial pilot. Other motifs in the story (e.g., crash or explosion of airship, recovery of pilot's body, recovery of airship parts, and occupants of airship supposed to be from Mars) occur in various reports published before the Aurora incident. For example, on the thirteenth of April the *Cleveland World* printed the following dispatch:

**B O O M !**

**AND THE AIRSHIP WHICH WAS  
TRAVELLING OVER MICHIGAN  
WAS BLOWN TO PIECES  
Mass of wire, bones and a  
piece of a propellor  
were found on earth**

Galesburgh, Mich., April 13. Henry Sommers and a friend report that they witnessed last night what appeared to be the explosion of the airship. It was accompanied by a heavy report as if thunder and the scattering of light. Immediately thereafter the machine, which had been visible in the heavens, disappeared from view.

This morning near the scene of the alleged explosion were found a mass of wire that appeared to have been connected with electrical machines and a piece of light propellor wheel that must, when intact, have measured 12 feet in diameter. Carpenters employed on a new house say they found small pieces of bone scattered on the roof. [April 13, 1897]

Variants of this account appeared in a number of other papers, including the *Dallas Morning News*.

In 1966 Frank Masquelette, a staff writer for the *Houston Post* considered the incident at Aurora sufficiently unusual to merit inclusion in a series of articles he wrote on the Great Airship Mystery of 1897. His articles discussed the possibility that the airship sightings had been a nineteenth-century UFO flap, a theory with which ufologists were already familiar. He reprinted the story in its original form and attempted to verify it through the editor of the *Wise County Messenger*, who made enquiries in Aurora.

He discovered only that a Judge Proctor had lived in the area. Since none of the other residents questioned recognised any other parts of the story, Masquelette concluded that the story was "pure fiction". But his article had put Aurora back on the map.

Aurora is located in southeastern Wise County about 30 miles north of Fort Worth. It was established in 1873 and rapidly became a major centre of cotton production and trade and the largest town in the county. By 1891 it claimed two hotels, two schools, two churches, two cotton gins, a drugstore, a livery stable and a newspaper. In addition it boasted fourteen saloons, three doctors, two lawyers, an undertaker and a brass band. But when the railroads bypassed the town its days were numbered. An epidemic of spotted fever killed or disabled many of its citizens, and fear of the disease started an exodus which was accelerated by other disasters. A fire destroyed the western half of the town and the boll-weevil destroyed the cotton industry. By the end of the century most of the houses and all of the businesses had been placed on skids and moved to the nearby railroad towns. In 1906 with the removal of the post office

to Rhome, Aurora became a memory.

In 1966 and 1967 ufologists and reporters flocked to the town to look for the evidence which Masquelette has concluded was non-existent. Investigators located the site of Judge Proctor's house and well, and questioned residents about the crash of the airship. When no witnesses were found and metal detectors failed to locate any pieces of the airship, investigators associated with *Flying Saucer Review* pronounced the story a hoax. Aurora's new found fame rapidly faded away.

In the course of the 1966 investigation, Etta Pegues, a local writer and member of the Wise County Historical Society, became interested in Aurora. She wrote a number of articles on the history of the town which were published in local newspapers between 1966 and 1972. In her articles she declared the 1897 article a hoax on the basis of interviews with two former residents of the town who had known Judge Proctor and S. E. Haydon. According to these men, Haydon, the author of the airship story, who was a cotton buyer and newspaper correspondent, had hoped that the hoax

*It boasted fourteen saloons,  
three doctors, two lawyers,  
an undertaker and a brass band.*

would bring some life to the failing town. He was remembered as the writer of satirical verses enjoyed by local residents. One of the men interviewed could still recite from memory one of Haydon's long poems. Judge J. S. Proctor had served as Justice of the Peace for Precinct Five of Wise County from 1892 to 1902 and had edited a newsletter at Aurora after the local newspaper had ceased production. As additional proof of the fictional nature of Haydon's account, Pegues asserted that Judge Proctor had no windmill and that every grave in the Aurora Cemetery was located on a map with complete records for each burial. There were no Martians listed.

At the same time that Etta Pegues' articles were appearing, Frank X. Tolbert, Texas history writer for the *Dallas Morning News* received an enquiry about the Aurora incident. He answered with a series of articles suggesting that the entire 1897 airship mystery had been a hoax. Some years before a retired railroad telegrapher in Dallas had told Tolbert that railroad telegraphers in Iowa had planned the hoax and that railroaders throughout the country had joined in the fun. Communicating by telegraph, the railroadmen were able to produce real-



istic accounts of the phantom airship's movements across the country. Tolbert proposed that the Great Airship Mystery be renamed the "Great Truthful Scully Hoax", after Joseph E. "Truthful" Scully, a Fort Worth freight conductor for the Texas and Pacific Railroad who was chosen to introduce the hoax into Texas because of his reputation for honesty. Tolbert explained sightings not connected with the railroad as mass hallucinations or independent hoaxes inspired by the railmen's creations.



Railroaders throughout the country had joined in the fun.

Having settled the question of the Aurora airship, the reporters turned to other matters, and the people of Aurora considered the future. Re-incorporated in 1972, the town now consisted of an Arco filling station, a Baptist church, and the Aurora cemetery. The town planned to enter a new era of prosperity as a suburb of the sprawling Dallas-Forth Worth conurbation. After the opening of the nearby Dallas-Forth Worth International Airport, the population of Aurora increased to almost three hundred, and land prices soared. But in the spring of 1973 history caught up with Aurora again.

In March Hayden Hewes, director of the International UFO Bureau of Oklahoma City, arrived in town armed with S. E. Haydon's story and accompanied by a team of investigators. Bill Case, aviation writer for the Dallas Times Herald and a member of the Midwest UFO Network, decided to cover the investigation. On the 25th of March, Case reported that IUFOB had located the crash site and were interviewing residents about the crash. He also printed a paraphrase of Haydon's 1897 account which contained errors in date and time as well as interpolations from other 1897 accounts, including descriptions of the shape and colour of the craft. By the first of April the wire

services had picked up the story, and although the IUFOB investigators had no more success than their predecessors, hundreds of sight-seers converged on the little town. Souvenir hunters stole twenty headstones from the cemetery. Day and night reporters and investigators bothered everybody in the little community. In the spring of 1897 the question of the day had been "Have you seen the airship?" Seventy six years later that question had become "Do you believe in the spaceship?"

In May a man describing himself as a professional treasure hunter located unusual metallic fragments buried near the alleged crash site. He claimed that his metal detector gave the same readings at a grave in the Aurora Cemetery as it did at the crash site. The investigators sent the fragments to metallurgists for analysis. In the meantime Hadon's story, or rather Bill Case's reduction thereof, was reprinted almost every week in area newspapers in the hope that a witness might come forward. In late May a local man who had previously refused all interviews volunteered that his father had seen the crash and told him the story many times. He had been five years old at the time and remembered going with his father to the crash site. His account of what happened agreed in most details with Case's version of the 1897 story - including errors and interpolations. His account differed in that he did not remember his father saying that there had been anyone killed in the crash.

Hewes, having concluded that he had sufficient evidence to warrant the opening of what he believed was the grave of an extraterrestrial being, arrived in Aurora one Sunday morning prepared to dig. When his plan was discovered angry townspeople posted armed guards at the cemetery to prevent the desecration of the grave. Later the Cemetery Association was able to prove that the grave belonged to the Carr family. Ostracized by the community and by other UFO investigators because of his rash actions, Hewes soon withdrew his support from the investigation and announced that the story was a hoax.

MUFON continued the investigation dropped by the IUFOB and soon discovered a strange circular grave marked with a rough stone bearing a crude design which appeared to be the outline of a cigar-shaped craft with portholes. Two nonagenarian former residents of Aurora who wished to remain anonymous had reportedly led researchers to the grave under the limb of a gnarled oak tree near the edge of the cemetery. Two additional witnesses then told their stories to the press.

## SPORTING LIFE



Science writer and Rendlesham investigator Ian Ridpath has a less well-known side, as a distance runner. Competitor in the 1985 London Marathon dressed as Halley's Comet, Ridpath is seen here competing in a publisher's charity race at Twickenham, holding aloft a cardboard-cut-out comet. Finishing well up in a field of over 1,000 runners, 'Ridders' won a special prize as 'Wally of the Race'.

Continued from opposite page

But in Aurora a transformation took place that was not covered by the press. The small community divided in two factions: those who believed in the possibility that Haydon's story might have been true at least in part, and those who totally rejected it. As the split widened between the two groups rumours developed and spread unaided by the media: Brawley Oates supports the spaceman story for the money; his arthritis was caused by drinking water from the well which was contaminated by radiation from the crash; the mysterious grave is that of a victim of the spotted fever epidemic and the germs are still alive in it; spacemen are watching the grave and will remove the evidence before it can be dug up; Bill Case invented the whole story including the testimony of the witnesses. While these and other rumours spread, the investigation continued.

A woman of ninety-one recalled that her parents had told her the story of the crash and the burial of the pilot, whom they had described as a small man. She claimed that she had forgotten the incident until she had read the recent stories about it in the newspapers. A ninety-eight year old man from a nearby town told of hearing of the crash from two friends who had seen the debris from the explosion. Flowers began to appear daily at the mysterious grave. Brawley Oates, the owner of the land identified as the crash site began to receive mysterious telephone calls from people identifying themselves as members of the U.S. Army or the CIA and who were curious about metal fragments and the grave. An Italian journalist sent to cover the story said that in June 1973 Aurora was a bigger story in Europe than Watergate.

When the analysis of the metal fragments revealed that it was an aluminium alloy which could not have been manufactured in the US before 1920, MUFON announced that the extraterrestrial origin of the metal had been proved and asked permission to open the circular grave. The Cemetery Association on the other hand saw the metallurgical findings as proof that the fragments had been planted, and blocked the exhumation request in the District Court. In July a MUFON investigator stated that person or persons unknown had probed the grave and removed the metal. In August MUFON suspended the investigation without reaching a conclusion, and Bill Case privately admitted that the story was probably a hoax.

In 1974 a state historical marker which gives a brief account of the legend was erected at the gate of Aurora Cemetery.



# MAGONIA INTERNATIONAL



the first of an occasional series in which Hilary Evans reviews developments in ufology from around the world. Here he reviews the latest book by French ufologist Bertrand Meheust (above, left).

MEHEUST, Bertrand. *Soucoupes Volantes et Folklore*. Mercure de France, 1985. 95F.

**"Even if close encounters do not contain any spectacular novelties, they lead the researcher to modify his attitude towards an entire dimension of human experience"**

But, you object, if there's anything new and spectacular, it's surely close encounters? No, replies Bertrand Meheust, spectacular maybe, but certainly not new. And in case after case he shows how the amazing adventures of today's abductees are paralleled by tales which folklore collectors have heard so often they've got number-codes for the recurring motifs - 4077 for 'caught in fairyland', 5082 for 'fairy borrowing' and so on.

Meheust has a passion for parallels. In his fine previous book, *Science Fiction et Soucoupes Volantes*, he broke new ground by demonstrating the similarities between old science fiction narratives and later UFO incidents. The evinced, he suggested, a cultural continuity which must be taken into account if a proper understanding of either is to be achieved; for such recurrent parallels could hardly be attributed to coincidence.

In his new book he may at first seem to be treading in the footsteps of his com-

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patriot Jacques Vallee; but in a sense the two authors go about their work in contrary ways. While Vallee asks ufologists to draw on myth for help in understanding the UFO encounter, Meheust is primarily addressing the folklorists. What he is saying to them is, in effect, Look, here is folklore in the making; here is your subject, not mounted on a pin in the museum, but live, in the field, on the wing. By examining these contemporary stories you can learn something about those older ones. If you can find out, by studying the people who make these reports, how and why they come to tell such tales, then you will have learnt how those others came to be created by narrators who are out of your reach.

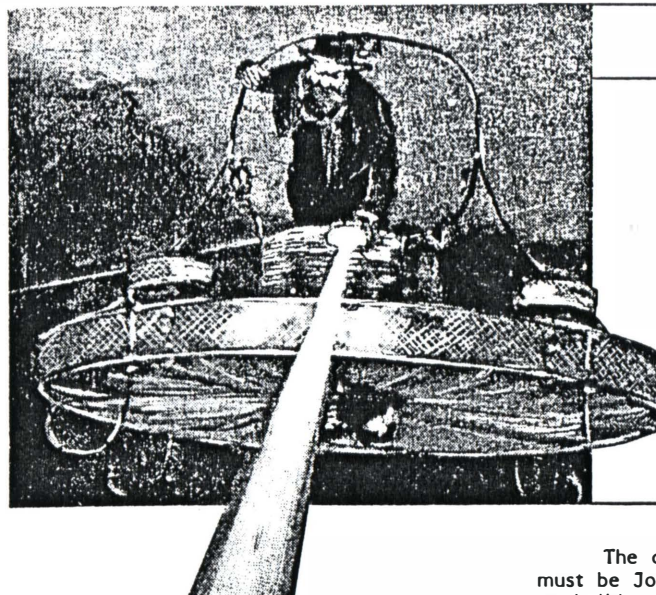
Will the folklorists listen? Until recently one would have said that it was unlikely; but today, on the one hand the ufologists are beginning to acquire a degree of scientific credibility, and on the other, folklorists are beginning to realise that the making of folktales was not an activity confined to the childhood of the race, but something enduring, perhaps even something man needs as much as he needs his dreams.

Meheust's ideas have force no matter what your view of the 'reality' of the encounter events. Whether you believe them to have taken place as reported; whether you believe they occur within the witnesses own mind; or whether you suspect something between the two, perhaps an ephemeral 'reality' created by the percipient's mind, or an illusion imposed on him by some external agency for its own obscure purposes - no matter which hypothesis you favour, the question remains: Why does the encounter experience take this particular form? Why these stereotypes and not others?

The complete answer would be a cultural history of Western Man in the late 20th century, and perhaps that is just what Meheust hopes will follow from his work. For his part he does little more than indicate that here is a trail which should prove rewarding. Apart from occasional references there is no comment on how other stereotypes came into being, such as the Vision-of-the-Virgin stereotype or the demon-possession stereotype, though these are certainly relevant. As Sudhir Kakar demonstrates in his fascinating study of healing techniques in India, *Shamans, Mystics and Doctors*, different cultural groups suffer from the same ailments, but under different forms. Today's close-encounterers of alien visitors and yesterday's encounterers with fairies are surely not only having the same experiences, despite superficial differences, but having them for much the same reasons.

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Nigel Watson

## A DREAM OF NUTS AND BOLTS

The doyen of UFO construction experts must be John Searl who has been attempting to build a pilotable saucer for longer than I care to remember. Through his 'National Space Research Consortium' he has been able to extract £8,000 from credulous souls, who don't have a clue about what his twelve-foot long sheet of calculations means. He has even spent £2,000 on taking flying lessons, in order that he could 'get the feel of flight'.

"We have the technology," he said, but: "It's just a case of overcoming a bit of red tape and building the three-seater craft. I expect to be setting out on the maiden voyage of my levity [sic.] disc before the end of 1978. Or certainly during the first half of 1979." [3]

He could well have been testing his craft in early 1978 because a group of women from Georgia told Steven Spielberg that they had seen a lighted unidentified aerial object pass low-down over them, and on it they distinctly saw painted along one side of it the letters 'UFO!' [4]

Searl's dream is to construct a levity disc which "will carry 1,000 scientists, doctors and nurses, and others. (Presumably the medical staff are there in case of accident or misfortune or accident). It'll be like a city, and measure over a thousand feet in diameter. A very big vehicle," he said.

Bob Dunn, an American engineer, studied UFO sightings made in the USA and came to the conclusion that: "The nuclear propulsion system, capable of ten million pounds of thrust, enables these craft to travel at speeds of 125,000 miles per hour in the upper atmosphere, and their unique

THE inventive skills of humanity have often been challenged, and without pioneers in what were often thought to be ridiculous and absurd ventures the world would lack an infinite variety of things we now take for granted.

The reported speed and aerial dexterity of flying saucers have prompted a legion of modern day men to seek to construct their own UFO-type craft. These men might well be mad visionaries, despots or modern-day Noahs, but we have to admire their ideas, their ingenuity and not least of all their guts.

Guillermo Jaimes Gonzalez, a Mexican engineer, seems to have a sound foundation for his man-made UFO: he has been in touch with the aliens and they have let him in on the secret of their propulsion system. With a 'completely new metal system' his model of a flying saucer will fly and make odd manoeuvres (just like 'real' UFOs) when hit with an electrical charge of one million volts. I suspect that anything will shift pretty sharply when hit with a million volts, but who am I to argue with the aliens? [1]

In South America another engineer, called Basil van den Berg also used messages from the extraterrestrials to build an anti-gravity machine with a 'no fuel engine'. He said he was going to Mexico to test the invention. But on the day his secret was revealed in the press he disappeared; perhaps his machine whisked him away before he could discover how to make the return journey! [2]



propulsion and exhaust systems allow them to behave in the erratic way described by countless thousands of UFO witnesses: forwards, upwards, downwards, sideways - any direction except backwards.

"I believe the parts were brought in from outer space, causing the sonic booms as they came into our atmosphere. And I believe these craft are manned. Judging from their size and the number of engines, they would need a crew of 25 to 30 to operate."

Dunn added that: "With today's technology, I think the United States could produce one of these vehicles within, say, the next ten years." To confirm his faith in the vehicle he built a small model of it (which "doesn't fly, of course") and applied for a U.S. Patent. [5]

Meanwhile an engineer at the Johnson Space Center, Alan C. Holt, claimed he was the secretary of the Vehicle International Systems Investigative Team (VISIT). He said: "Our purpose is to study unidentified flying object phenomena in an attempt to gain an understanding of the physics and technology which UFOs may represent."

Apparently Holt believes that the energy released by the merging of magnetic fields is the probable source of power used in UFO propulsion systems. However, UFOs travel through "fourth dimension space-time transformation rather than the simple three dimensional travel we are familiar with." [6]



Another American - this time an expert on missiles - who masterminded the construction of Evel Knievel's rocket-powered bike which limped abortively across the Snake River canyon, has come up with the ultimate Model T rocketship. Astoundingly, he has managed to attract 25 to 30 'volunteers' who are eager to fly in his rocketship.

In all he plans to build three rockets at a cost of a million dollars, and after investing \$800,000 of his own money he has built 80% of the first rocket, which was scheduled for launch in 1979.

"There is no question that the space mission is feasible", he said, "We have done all the paper studies." [7]

Democratic candidate John Fritz promised that his 'United Fritz Organisation' (UFO) would build a flying saucer factory in Waikiki, Hawaii, if he won a seat in the state legislature. In 'UFO's' election address he claimed: "A long time ago in a galaxy

far away a man named John Aloha Mahalo was born. His mission: to lead Hawaii and the planet Earth into the Galactic community that has long existed." [8]

Despite what debunkers were saying in the early 'fifties, a circular aerofoil can be perfectly viable. An experimental aircraft with a circular wing set above a conventional fuselage and tailplane was successfully flown pre-war in America. In 1942, the Vought Corporation began test-flying the V-173 'flying pancake', a lightweight full scale mock-up of the XF5U-1 experimental VTOL fighter. Altogether it logged some 200 flights, and among the test pilots was Charles Lindbergh. The project was abandoned not though any inherent defects in the design but because the development of jet engines made the propellor powered craft obsolete.

In the late 'fifties and early 'sixties many people patented flying saucer type aircraft with the U.S. Patent Office [9], and on 10th March 1972 even British Rail filed a flying saucer design at the London Patent Office. [10] Some saucer-type aircraft have been built and marketed. Short's of Belfast produced a small machine which was nothing more than a propellor and engine housed in a three-foot-diameter shell. It could fly for two hours and could carry television equipment so that it fulfilled a useful reconnaissance role. Also, since the mid-seventies a disc-shaped helium filled airship called 'Sky Ship' has been developed and promoted by Airship industries. [11]

But 34-year-old Charles King did not want to go to all the bother of designing and building his own saucer. Instead he simply placed the following advertisement in an Adelaide, South Australia, newspaper:

"WANTED: Intergalactic flying saucer, 10-person accommodation minimum" [12,13]

Within a couple of days he received 15 replies, but unfortunately he said they came from 'crank' callers. It takes one to know one.

**REFERENCES:** 1. The Pittsburgh Press, 23 April 1977. 2. Stem, 29 April 1962. 3. Daily Express, 25 April 1978. 4. Sunday Express, 12 March 1978. 5. Midnight Globe, 4 July 1978. 6. Houston (Tx.) Post, 20 May 1979. 7. Sydney Sun, 13 Nov. 1978. 8. The Australian, 9 Nov. 1978. 9. SACHS, Margaret, The Ufo Encyclopedia, Putnam, 1980, pp.242-6. 10. OSMAN, Tony. 'On an H-bomb to the Stars', The Unexplained No. 5. 11. Lord Ventry and Kolesnik, Eugene. James Pocket Book 7, Airship Development, Macdonald & Jones, 1976. 12. Sunday People, 5 June 1977. 13. Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph, 4 June 77

# CHILDREN OF ANOTHER GOD

Peter Rogerson

*THERE recently appeared in that always useful source of ufological folklore, Northern UFO News, an article by Jenny Randles about children who had 'aliens' as imaginary companions. She suggested that such children are being taught by non-human forces in an attempt to raise their consciousness. Other writers in this field have evoked images of alien children - 'space babies' - possessed of strange talents. Both see these children as leaders of a new age.*

Other writers in this field have evoked images of alien children - space babies - possessed of strange talents. The vision is of children as leaders of a new age.

The idea of a race of divine children as harbingers of the transformation of mankind crops up in a number of obscure quarters. For example, the famous SPR 'Cross Correspondents' (a group of Edwardian ladies who ostensibly received enigmatic classical references from the deceased Gurney, Podmore, Myers, et al) produced scripts relating to the 'Children of the Spirit', whose "birth, character and destiny are influenced by the spirits responsible for the plan [of world redemption]. Making use of the genetic knowledge of Frances M Balfour [a distinguished geneticist] and the psychological skills of Edmund Gurney. This technique was known as psychological eugenics. They were to be the establishers of a world order of peace, born out of war and sacrifice." [1]

This plan was first revealed by W. N. Salter, husband of one, and son-in-law of another cross-correspondent.

Salter also includes a couple of examples of the mental imagery associated with these scripts: "St Francis of Assisi in his monk's robe. Laurels covered with snow... 'there is always snow on their laurels'". The next image was of a typical Victorian christening party gathering "looking



with awe rather than affection on a baby in a cradle. [It] struck me as a realisation that the little creature who will someday rank among the saints is not their own, but some sort of a changeling..."

The presumed origin of this changeling is revealed in a subsequent vision: "All sorts of glass retorts, tubes, wheels (especially noted a sort of double wheels). Some of the receptacles were full of clear liquid full of shining bubbles... it ended as far as I am concerned in a most beautiful radiant seraphs head in a large test tube".

No doubt this vision, partly alchemist's homunculus, partly Dr. Frankenstein, will be claimed as a precognition of (test tube babies' - of which more later.

Let us note that these visions occurred during World War I, at a time when concern for peace was uppermost in peoples' minds; and at a time and among a class of people where eugenics was a fashionable doctrine of 'world improvement'. Today such a vision causes shivers to run up our spines: at least those of us who are not in California MENSA.



Modern contactees have claimed both supernormal powers and extraterrestrial origins for their offspring. Cynthia Appleton, a contactee from Aston, Birmingham, in the 1950s, claimed a spaceman had materialised in her living-room on a day when there was a stressful and stormy atmosphere. In subsequent 'projected' and 'physical' visitations the figure, sometimes with a companion, delivered the usual contactee platitudes, made vague references to titanium, and uttered various second rate zen-like koans. An example: "The truth of life is living and all that exists in life is not just a matter of good and evil for these do not exist. There is the flow of life only. In this flow one thing shall devour another to be made whole". Another: "Time is the passing of one thing to another. The beginning of a blossom, its blooming, then fading".

In September 1958 she was informed that the following May she would give birth to a child - which prediction came true (if we are to believe John Dale's account [2]) even to within an ounce of the birth weight, and a couple of days of birth. Mrs Appleton explained coyly that although her husband was, of course, the baby's physical father, the boy was the spiritual son of the fair-haired spaceman. With fair hair, almond skin and blue eyes, the child was to be named Matthew (Gift of God), and would be a leader at the age of fourteen [3]. Stories were told of the curious precocity of his childhood. This story, with its perhaps too conscious echoes of the Annunciation, soon disappeared from public memory; of the fate of Matthew Appleton nothing is known (at least to the present writer, perhaps some Magonia readers know more), clearly he has not been a 'great leader' since 1973, his fourteenth birthday.

The South African contactee Elizabeth Klarer went one better. She actually broke South Africa's infamous Immorality Act by having carnal relations with a spaceman, with resulting offspring [4]. This is a modern version of the folktale of the woman seduced by a fairy, who takes the child to Magonia. This story is best exemplified in the traditional ballad of the Great Silkie of Skule Skerry, in which the child of the earthly wife and the semi-divine seal-man is slaughtered by her husband, "a guid gunner". Maureen Duffy [5] sees this as the death of a young girl's fantasy at her first true sexual experience, though one suspects that the anonymous poet may have had a grander vision of 'cosmic catastrophe' and fall from innocence, in which a primordial bond between humanity and nature is shattered by the world of adult authority, rationality and metal, which



Elizabeth Klarer:  
Breaking the Immorality Act?

reduces nature to a thing to be shot at.

If Elizabeth Klarer's child was taken to Magonia, so was the child conceived by Antonio Villas Boas and the wild woman, passion red in her erogenous zones and barking like an animal, on a spaceship with a clock with no hands.

Themes of divine children are the stock in trade of mythology, and some anthropologists relate this to concepts surrounding lineage (fatherless heroes can establish rules for the whole community rather than one line of descent). Perhaps this throws some light on the recent debate concerning Bishop Jenkins' views on the virgin birth of Christ.

In modern science fiction 'divine children' play an interesting role. John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos* describes a village which is sealed off from the rest of the country, and all women of child-bearing age give birth to identical, fair-haired, golden eyed children. According to Jung, the peculiar parthogenesis and the golden eyes denote kinship with the sun, and characterise the children of divine progeny. Their fathers seem to have been angels of the annunciation who have come down from a 'supercerebral' place, to take off the stupidity and backwardness of homo sapiens [6].

In Arthur Clarke's novel *Childhood's End* the Overlords - symbols of rational, scientific progress - arrive from space to end humanity's squabbles and create a rationalist

utopia on Earth. In the closing chapters it is seen that this utopia is sterile; its rationalism a defence against aspects and powers of the human personality which must be hidden until humanity has also gained true wisdom. The release of these powers comes with the birth of a generation of divine children, whose apotheosis marks the end of the race of mortals.

For writers such as Jenny Randles [7] these children may be already amongst us, being educated by non-human powers using 'psychic toys' in a sort of up-market Montessori education! On the other hand, Crystal Hogben, of the now defunct *Magic Saucer* magazine, believed that children suffering from hypercalcaemia were some sort of changelings, presumably in an analogy with *Midwich Cuckoos*.

But our society has much bleaker and more ominous images of childhood, as witness the rash of films such as *Rosemary's Baby*, the *Omen* series, and so forth, and the periodic media fears and social panics over clones and test-tube babies (which included the extraordinarily libelous claim from one extreme traditional Roman Catholic source that Louise Brown, the first 'test-tube baby' was a soulless monster with telekinetic powers). Evidently our fears of the changeling and the alchemists' homunculus still persist.

In tradition the changeling was either an inanimate object or a fairy which replaced a true human child. The changeling must be harshly treated, whereupon it may reappear as a human child. It is a 'thing' in the guise of a human. It is usually held that the myth arose as an explanation in response to the birth of Down's syndrome, hydrocephalic or otherwise deformed babies. However, a broader explanation is more probable: that the myth arose as a means of dealing with the failure of parental bonding, child abuse, and possibly infanticide in a poverty stricken rural economy. In a peasant society such as rural Ireland, where the mother/child bond was held especially significant, parental indifference and child abuse could be denied by the parents' reduction of the child to 'thing' status - a form of social death.

In adults, the explanation of 'taken by the fairies' was used to cover both premature physical death, and 'social death' through failure to adhere to accepted norms of behaviour. A significant proportion of those 'taken' were young women with depressive conditions who refused, or were unable, to perform housewifely duties. The blurring between actual and 'social' death often makes understanding of the narratives of such events very difficult.

The myths surrounding children raise important philosophical and theological issues. Children are unsocialised, and as such represent an intrusion of 'wilderness' into the adult world of 'habitat'. Western attitudes to childhood and child-rearing have differed as attitudes to the relative merits of 'wilderness' and 'habitat' have changes. To much of orthodox Christianity, following St Augustine, children were almost literally demonic intrusions, whose human status could only be safeguarded by the exorcising rite of baptism. True value was held by the community, in particular by the Church as earthly representative of the City of God, the perfect, immutable sphere. Children, repositories of original sin, were to be beaten into obedience.

However, from the eighteenth century onwards, Romantics and many Christians revived the alternative, Pelagian view of human nature. Sin was transmitted not by inheritance but by bad example and the corruption of a fallen society. The Wilderness was now seen as a repository of virtue, a divine realm from which children came 'bearing clouds of glory'. The natural innocence of childhood was glorified by philosophers such as Rousseau and poets such as Wordsworth.

Considerable attention was devoted to the behaviour and attributes of 'natural' wild children; whilst Victorian moralists wrote pious tracts about innocent children who died before they could be corrupted by the sinful world.

Such divergences of attitudes still dominate many social and political debates, such as environment v. heredity, naked ape v. social animal or 'progressive' v. 'traditional' education.

It is in the Romantic mode that Randles suggests that children represent the hope for the future. If these children are to be educated by aliens it implies the central failure of our society: adult society cannot be the guide and exemplar for these children, because of its limitless moral turpitude. It is implied that the civilization of the bomb and the concentration camp can produce nothing but hypocrisy when it preaches to the young; but that the 'aliens' who are to guide the young are in no sense truly alien. Rather the 'aliens' represent an ideal, utopian future society. The moral that the aliens, and the alien taught children, are only really 'alien' to our corrupted world of racial, national, religious and political alliance.

Similarly we can see that the self-description of any individual as being 'alien' suggests a depth of alienation not only from immediate family, but also from society



as a whole. Many (perhaps most) children go through a phase of believing that their parents are not their real parents (who are 'really' people of position and power). These fantasies can become acute in adopted children [9]. Similarly, outraged parents describe modern fashions as 'Martian' or 'alien'; the generation gap can become unlimited, leading to a radical alienation.

There is an intellectual tradition for this 'alienation': the gnostic vision of spirit trapped in an alien and hostile substance, and the case of 'Gary', discussed by Randles and Warrington [in 10] is an excellent example of the reappearance of archaic mythic material in schizophrenia.

But 'Gary' is an extreme example, and most star-babies must recognise their biological status as *homo sapiens*, so we are dealing with a psychological alienation, but one so extreme that the 'as if' qualification is cast aside. Nevertheless some identification with an idealised 'true humanity' still exists.

### These children are destined to lead new social movements...

These children are, it is claimed, destined to lead new social movements, and the example is given of Gaynor Sunderland, whose home has significantly been compared to a shrine. Children have been at the centre of a number of renovative movements, such as those associated with visions of the Virgin Mary, of whom Bernadette Soubirous is the most famous [11]. The role of the young Fox sisters was crucial in the birth of Spiritualism [12], and the role of teenage children in witchcraft epidemics such as Salem [13], or revivals such as the Great Awakening of 1735 is important.

The fact that many of these movements were lead by young girls, traditionally the most subservient and quietistic members of a patriarchal society, is most important. It serves to highlight the radical reversal of social relationships in a movement which rejects the old, corrupt order, as is no doubt reflected in the role of youth in radical movements of the left and right.

The modern 'New Age' movement was born out of generational conflict, and a rejection of what it saw as the false consciousness of the civilization of political economy. In the process a comprehensive cult of youth was created in the 1960's when a strong sense of the world being 'made anew' prevailed.

Increasingly, the 'New Age' movement in Britain has revived older Romantic themes: the lost rural idyll, the garden where human-kind and nature were in harmony. The renovation is also a restoration of the lost pre-historic innocence - supporters of Stanislas Grof and Alvin Lawson may see this as a projection of a personal pre-history, a return to the lost paradise of the womb. The late Nandor Fodor once identified fairyland with the womb; thus the abductee and the 'taken' escape from the world of responsibility to at least a psychological equivalent of the womb - or the womb of the grave.

And if Lawson is right, then the alien world from which the changeling child comes is indeed the womb. If so then the ultimate Wilderness and the ultimate Habitat are one and the same.

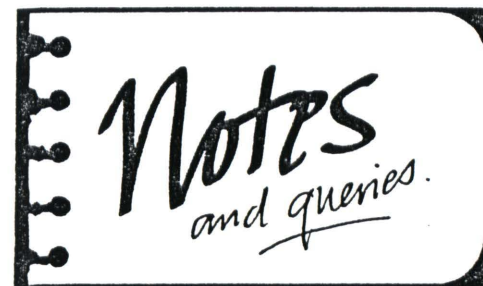
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Continued from page 8

In a recent interview by *Paris-Match*, Bertrand was asked: If these stories of abductions is nothing but a fantasy, what is the point of your research? He answered:

"The somnambulistic trance, totally rejected by the positivists of the nineteenth century, ended by revolutionising our thinking in the twentieth century, by clearing the path for psychoanalysis. I don't say there is nothing but fantasy in the stories told by the abductees. I simply don't know. But it seems to me that these phenomena present us with the material which could extend the perspectives of the science of Man."

If so, then this brief monograph - essentially it's only 130 pages long - could be a landmark in our understanding of ourselves.



TAKE a dozen or so of the country's best known speakers on all aspects of the paranormal and anomalous phenomena. Put them into a weekend of talks and demonstrations at one of London's newest and best equipped arts centres. Make sure that there's a bar and restaurant on the premises, as well as bookstalls and other attractions. Then stage the whole thing on the sunniest weekend of the summer and at the same time as the biggest musical event for years - the international Live-Aid concert.

You get the Brentford Wonderfest - a great weekend, but sorry about the audience! But those few people who did manage to get along to West London were rewarded by an event which at least presented the opportunity for a real debate between the speakers and audience. What was lacking in numbers was made up for by the quality of genuine two-way expression. This meant the audiences had the chance to really talk and debate with speakers like Brian Inglis, Andrew McKenzie, Guy Playfair, Tim Good, and other leading writers and speakers in their fields, who really had to argue their case with a small, but interested and well-informed audience. The subject covered in two and a half days of intensive talking covered everything from the Virgin Mary to Phantom Hitch-hikers; Nostradamus to hypnotic regression and UFOs to terrestrial zodiacs.

The weekend concluded with as many of the speakers as possible taking part in a 'Brains Trust' evening of solid questions and debate. Probably the widest range of experts put together in a single panel had to really earn their keep in two hours of solid, and often very tough, questioning.

Highlight of the weekend for a large, and predominantly local, audience was the anticipated 'exposé' of the infamous Brentford Griffin by earth mysteries researcher and self-styled 'psychic quester' Andy Collins. Collins had been intrigued by the television accounts of the sighting of the alleged griffin over Brentford (see Robert Rankin's column in the last *Magonia*, and the *Ealing Guardian*, *passim*), and came to investigate, suspecting fraud.

Following a convoluted series of brush-off phone calls, Collins eventually managed to track down one griffin 'witness', in circumstances so peculiar that they would have suggested an elaborate hoax to souls who might have less than total trust in the integrity of their fellow man.

However, the hero of the Green Stone caper was not to be put off by a little thing like lack of evidence. The griffin was real, we were vouchsafed; Mr Collins, who could spot a phoney at forty paces knew intuitively that his solitary witness was the real McCoy, and the griffin joined the pantheon of phantom beast infesting our green and pleasant land (or at least Brentford).

If the evidential standards which Collins has adopted over the griffin are typical of those demonstrated in the Green Stone business, or in any other of his sword-and-sorcery-type 'quests', forgive us for taking them with a pinch of salt. If mystery animal (and other) researchers are expecting to be taken seriously they must adopt standards of evidence which are capable of bearing up under detailed scrutiny.

This is certainly not the case here, unless of course Andy Collins's championing of the Brentford Griffin is itself part of some elaborate hoax. I think we should be told.

The Wonderfest was organised jointly by *Magonia* and the Watermans Art Centre. It is unlikely that another event on such a scale will be held again in the near future; however we would point out to our readers that early next year sees the anniversary of two major events in the life of the magazine. It is twenty years since the founding of MUFORG (Merseyside UFO Research Group) Bulletin, the forerunner of MUFOB and *Magonia*, as well as the tenth anniversary of the 'new' MUFOB and *Magonia* under the present editorial team.

We would like to mark this with a meeting of some kind, this time giving rather more advance notice than was possible for the Wonderfest, and would like to hear from any of our readers who would want to attend such an event, as members of the audience or any other capacity, or who have any ideas on what such an event should comprise.

As most of the editorial panel of *Magonia* now live in the south-east of England it is probable that the event would take place there, but we are open to persuasion on this matter, some of us being on record in the past as rather forcefully denouncing 'London based' events and organisations! Please drop us a line.



MOST people are now familiar with the term 'astral projection', or its more modern versions: 'out of the body experience' (OOBE). This describes the phenomenon where the mind, or 'astral double', is projected from the physical body to wander around our world, enter another time or plane of reality. Here is one such case from here, in England, although I feel that OOBE cannot account for the whole of it.

## PETER HOUGH

After hearing of Mr Keith Sefton's [\*] claims through a friend, I became intrigued, and agreed to investigate them.

Mr Sefton, a healthy looking 68-years-old, served in the Lancashire Fusilliers, but now retired, lives in a quiet backstreet in Wigan.

His experiences began suddenly in the summer of 1980. Before then there were no paranormal incidents in his life at all. This in itself is unusual, as most percipients of OOBE phenomena have a history of bizarre events to narrate - what started this great surge of happenings was something very sudden.

It occurred around 12.30, as Mr Sefton was sitting in the front room of his house, having lunch. Opposite, across the narrow road, lived an elderly lady who received a daily visit from the meals-on-wheels service. While he was eating, Mr Sefton glanced across expecting to see her standing in the bay window, waiting for the delivery van to arrive. In her place, and staring across at him, was an apparition of his dead mother.

She stood hands on hips, rigid like a statue, wearing a shawl which in life had been her favourite. Unbelieving, he moved closer to the window of the sitting room before fear overcame him and he turned his head away. Slowly he looked forward again, but his mother's stony expression still stared across the intervening yards. The image lasted for about eight minutes. Finally she turned away, and magically resolved into the familiar features of the old lady. This phenomenon occurred a second time, two weeks later under similar circumstances.

Following this, Mr Sefton was to have an altogether different experience. Having been divorced for fifteen years, imagine his surprise early one morning, upon hearing the voice of his wife calling out his name.

[\*] As is our regular practice with case reports, this name is a pseudonym. The percipients real name is on file.

It was unlike a voice 'heard' in a dream, he explained, but it was a perfectly natural auditory sound. Having received the strong impression it had come from outside, through the letterbox, he pulled on his dressing-gown and went downstairs. The door was unlocked, but there was no-one about. So convinced was he that he had heard his former wife calling out his name he ventured out onto the pavement and looked up and down the road.

This experience was also repeated two weeks later. Unfortunately, because of their poor relationship, he failed to contact his former wife to see if anything was wrong, to provide a possible explanation for this happening. What happened next was the penultimate episode before the main series of OOBE related events.

At eight o'clock one morning he was woken by the alarm clock. Preparing to rise, he suddenly heard footsteps outside the house and childrens' voices - voices which had a familiar ring, forcing his mind to drift back to his own childhood, picking up lumps of coal from the surrounding pits, during the 1926 General Strike.

Slowly his attention was brought back to the room. His eyes focussed on a spot two feet above the bed, and the intense feeling that a 'presence' hung there, came over him. Then a voice spoke into his mind.

"Yes, and you will hear them again," it said enigmatically, "You didn't die you know!" The voice reminded him of his mother's.

From then on until November 1981, Mr Sefton claims to have had twenty to thirty experiences.

Many of these displayed 'Out of Body' characteristics. Most occurred upon reaching the point of falling asleep. They usually began with a tiny blue light, no bigger than a pin-head, hovering about nine inches from his head.

After several nights it began to pulsate and expand to the size of a pea, becoming multi-coloured. Eventually the light would suddenly vanish to be replaced by the vivid image of a full moon, dark clouds scudding swiftly across its surface. These clouds thickened until only a halo remained. On these occasions Mr Sefton was drawn towards the bright ring, and through it...

While recounting the bizarre episodes which followed his journeys through the ring, Keith Sefton was at pains to convince me of the lucidity, the *realness*, of his adventures.

On his first and second visit he found himself looking up a long tube, or tunnel. At the other end was an eye, staring down at him. On the second occasion he saw enough

of the face to conclude it belonged to a man. He received the intimation that the man was observing him under the lens of a microscope.

Visions of the moon continued to manifest in the darkness of the moon, and when the clouds obscured all but its aura, he felt himself being drawn upwards and through it.

Exotic landscapes spread before him - on one occasion a beautiful pastoral scene of trees and flowers set around a lake. In the centre of the lake was a small rowing boat with a figure seated in it. It seemed the man was observing Mr Sefton, who in turn was observing him...

Once he travelled to a barren desert, strewn with rocks. A man inhabited this scene also, seated on a boulder, staring intensely in his direction. These figures were to crop up many times in various guises. They all shared similar physical characteristics and behaviour - always alone, they never spoke or moved, but seemed very aware of his intrusion. They had a 'foreign' look, possibly Grecian, with olive complexions, beards and hair of short, tight curls.

There were a few exceptions. The man in the desert, for instance, wore a long robe and was completely bald.

*He seemed to be travelling  
at tremendous speed  
through an intense blackness.*

He described how one night he was taken on a journey through the galaxies. One moment he was lying in bed, then he seemed to be travelling at tremendous speed through an intense blackness. Bright spheres rushed towards him then quickly away into the distance. He described this as highly invigorating. Not all these experiences occurred whilst waiting to fall asleep, sometimes he would wake up in the early hours of the morning. On seven or eight occasions at around six o'clock something roused him.

A few times he saw a man dressed in glittering trousers and tails rather like a circus ringmaster [1]. The man would silently wave a white stick at him, as if to emphasise a point. Usually he was only clearly visible if one eye was covered. The last vision of that nature was in November 1981. Then there was a gap of almost a year.

In September 1982 the visitations resumed. He was awoken at 4am, and described seeing a "little white lady in my eye". The image remained there for two or three minutes. This too reminded him of his mother,



wearing a long nightdress. Suddenly the image burst from his eye into the form of a vapourous cloud, reforming into a four inch high figure at the bottom of the bed. [2] The 'white lady' walked around in a circle holding something resembling a broom handle. As he put out a hand to touch her she told him with a smile that it was forbidden. Then she passed out of sight as if she had slipped behind a black curtain.

I questioned Mr Sefton carefully about the physiological and psychological effects before, during and after these experiences. I also encouraged him, during our two meetings and subsequent correspondence, to air his own views on the matter.

In answer to my question of whether he could be experiencing very vivid dream imagery, he reminded me they had only begun in 1980, and went on:

"I have dreams, but these are not dreams - when I dream there are no colours, things are not clear. During these events I receive the most inexplicable panoramic views, and throughout I sense that something is feeding information into my mind. If only more people could experience it..."

He went on to explain that often he felt that he was in two places at once: the 'here' of the bedroom, and also in another 'reality frame'. Time seemed suspended and incosequential. This was illustrated one Saturday afternoon in the down-to-earth surroundings of Wigan market.

The aisles between the stalls were crowded with shoppers, stocking up with meat and fresh vegetables for the weekend. As Keith Sefton picked his way through the crowd, suddenly all the noise diminished, and he felt his "consciousness was partially lifted from our plane". Then out of this unnatural silence a lone child began calling. He focussed hard on a stallholder serving a woman with apples, and the noise and bustle of the marketplace returned.

This cross-references nicely with the sensations reported by people witness to close-encounter UFO experiences. Many have noted that all sounds, such as birds singing or traffic noise on nearby roads, disappeared.

Why Mr Sefton's mother should feature so prominently in these events is open to conjecture. He is not particularly religious, and has sought out books and people who would give him a logical scientific explanation for all this. The tunnel through which he passes on his journeys is a common component of out-of-body experiences, and by those relating accounts of an 'afterlife' during near-death experiences.

During questioning it transpired that

just prior to many of these events he found himself breathing unnaturally deeply. Could Mr Sefton have unwittingly put himself into a trance? The heavy breathing would involve a degree of hyper-ventilation; flooding the body with oxygen and depriving the brain of sugar. Practitioners of yoga are adept at this, believing that it charges up the etheric double.

Also of interest is the phenomenon of hypnogogic and hypnopompic imagery, under study by psychiatrists. This refers to the state of mind when one is about to fall asleep or awaken, respectively. Something very strange can happen when the brain is neither fully asleep or awake, but 'in neutral', as it were. Very vivid hallucinations sometimes occur. This condition is known to effect something between half and three-quarters of the population. Although the sensations generally are visual or auditory, they may also involve heat, cold, odour or touch.

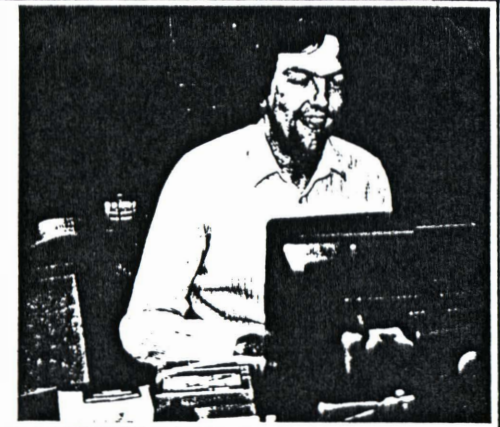
But the question remains: do these states of altered consciousness cause exotic imagery to manifest, or is the brain merely put into a mode where it is receptive to contact from an objective, exterior source? I know of one northern gentleman who would be interested in the answer to that one.

Meanwhile, the experiences have begun again. I quote from a recent letter:

"I have had a few visions on waking in the morning, since last I saw you. I suddenly found myself in a monastery. The entrance and surrounding walls were in dark colours, but the centre was beautifully lit. There were about twelve girls in a ring who were dancing holding the hems of their long white frocks, moving into the ring and out of it. I also saw the faces of two men, whom I did not recognise..."

NOTES. 1. This rather incongruous image has a almost identical precedent in the case of 'Miss Z', investigated by John Rimmer and Peter Rogerson, and reported in MUF0B. Other members of Miss Z's family had reported hypnogogic and hypnopompic experiences, including her father: "On another occasion there were about a dozen figures wearing 'glittery' silver suits... [they were] normal looking human figures and the suits of a normal style, resembling 'glitter' suits worn by show-business personalities" (MUF0B, new series 4, p.4) 2. This also echoes the experience of Miss Z's father, who on one occasion awoke to find a number of tiny figures just a few inches high running about the room - some on tiny horses! It would appear that this type of bizarre imagery is more widespread than one might expect, and we would be interested to hear from Magonia readers who have had experience of it - either as percipients or investigators.

## THE NIGEL WATSON COLUMN



THE adventurous chase through time and space which culminated in Andy Collins's *The Sword and the Stone* booklet (privately pub. 1982) and Keatman and Phillips's *The Green Stone* (Spearman, 1982) has given ufologists and others an interest in strange mystical stones. In *Magonia* 14 John Rimmer noted that a search for a jewel shaped like a hare initiated by Kit Williams, author of *Masquerade* has many parallels with the 'psychic' journey after the green Meonia stone. Jenny Randles in *Common Ground* 10 also points out that the 'facts' of the green stone saga can be neatly linked with the fictional *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*, by Stephen Donaldson. To add my contribution I'd like to point out that three popular American films of 1984 feature the search for sacred stones. Spielberg's *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* has the jingoistic hero searching for a stone with magical powers to aid a starving Indian village. *Conan the Destroyer* involves the search for a magic jewel that will unleash the god Dag-oth's power; whilst *Romancing the Stone* is another story of daring-do for the sake of one of these little sparkling blighters. It looks as if the world has become completely stoned out of its mind!

As an interesting aside it is noteworthy that the ancient Egyptians used to wear a variety of talismans and amulets. One of the most popular types of amulet was beetle-shaped and known as the scarab. This represented life, energy, renewal, and allegiance with the sun. The Egyptians made them out of limestone, marble or green basalt. The latter sort were often put into a gold setting.

Then there are stories involving crystal gazing as a means of communicating with

spirits. Dr. John Dee (1527 - 1608) used several people to help him with this work, and Dee himself in 1582 saw a vision of the angel Uriel who gave him a crystal egg which now reposes in the British Museum. Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church, even claimed that two crystals enabled him to translate the golden tablets he found into the *Book of Mormon*. Additionally, Ruth S. Noel in *The Mythology of Middle Earth* notes the power of rings and gems in Teutonic and Celtic mythology. The ring in *The Lord of the Rings* is, she says,

...no longer just a fairytale ring, a wish-ring, but the repository of the destructive force of an evil power and intelligence. The irony is that if it were not also a wish-ring, if it were not precious and did not confer power, it would not have been evil, and could not have enslaved anyone. (pp.152-153)

Funny how in fiction and in 'fact' stones still seem to evoke slavish devotion even in our micro-chip world. Ironically, the spread of home computers has meant that more and more people are playing adventure games. These, and board games like 'Dungeons and Dragons' have, as Andrew Collins notes, a great similarity with "the contents of present day mystical quests, such as those carried out by Graham Phillips and myself. Both involve fighting demons, dragons and black knights; both have clues, tests, tasks and traps to overcome; both necessitate the location of mythical talismans and tools; and both weave a path through the landscape, going from one important site to another. In fact, psychic quests are like real life versions of Dungeons and Dragons; and I know which one I'd rather play!" (*Earthquest News*, 13, p.31)





**Anomalous Phenomenon Review**, 2,2,1985. Once the scourge of ufology in its previous incarnation as UFO Research Review, it now seems to be floundering out of its depth in the realm of 'earth mysteries' (lots of photos of rather undistinguished stones); and rerunning editor Morrell's favourite 'angel hair' hobby horse. Let's hope it gets some of the old bite back. £2.52 [sic.] per annum, from 443 Meadow Lane, Nottingham, NG2 3GB.

**APRO Bulletin**. Vol 32, no. 12; vol 33, no. 1. End of an era as after 32 year APRO Bulletin ceases publication, raising considerable doubts to the future of APRO as a viable organisation. With the standard of recent issues this may be no great loss - bitty compilations of newspaper clippings and rehashes - is there anything more to be said on Ubatuba (1957, if you remember that far back!) One interesting piece though, on the continuing strange events at the Yakima Indian Reservation in Washington State. Back issues still available from 3910 East Kleindale Road, Tucson, AZ 85712.

**BUFORA Bulletin**. No. 17, May 1985. Do we need more on the Valetich disappearance? Australian researcher Paul Norman thinks so, and gives the background to the Bass Straits 'flap' of 1978. Jenny Randles looks at abductions, and Hilary Evans reviews UFO links with other fields of study. Ken Phillips makes it clear that users of the UFO Anamnesis technique are aware of its pitfalls. The editorial direction of BUFORA Bulletin is sound, with more concern for production values it could be the flagship of British ufology. Subscription as part of BUFORA membership. Details: 30 Vermont Rd., London SE 19.

**Fate**, May 1985. Best issue for some time, with a critical look by Christopher Lane of the claims of correspondence between the 'new physics' and mysticism; Maccabee on old UFO cases; articles on the phantom panther in suburban Michigan; and the unbelievable tale of the Highgate Vampire. The trend towards straight archaeology continues, with an article

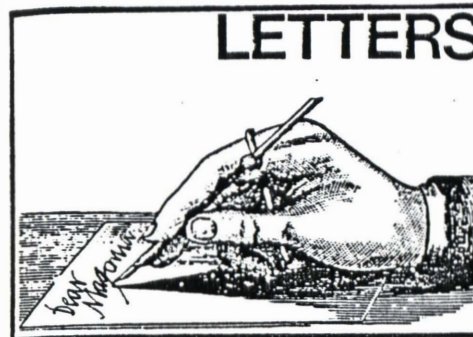
by Michael Goss of 'Pete Marsh' of Wilmslow and a piece on the history of the catapult. As always, excellent book reviews, consistently superior to those in the SPR Journal. £1.05 per issue from newsstands, or from 500 Hyacinth, Highland Park, ILL. 60035, USA.

**Flying Saucer Review**, vol. 30, no. 5, June 1985. The last fragments of reason are thrown overboard in a welter of self-indulgent editorial foot-noting. The sole message from FSR now is to batten down the hatches, the blue meanies are about to take over and Gordon Creighton is the last hope of Western civilization. For the rest of us our only chance is to persuade overseas ufologists that FSR does not represent British ufology. And what are half those people on the masthead doing there - do any of them read FSR these days? Subscription (for anyone who's bothered) is £7.50 p.a. from FSR Publications Ltd., Snodland [sic.], Kent, ME6 5HJ.

**Ley Hunter**. No. 98. Now in a larger format, and back into litho printing, which makes the ugly dot-matrix typeface a little easier to read, TLH has taken some stick lately for an alleged 'over-scientific' approach. Little evidence of that here, despite an article on radiation at megalithic sites, and 'magnetic' stones (complete with graphs). There's enough about the great outdoors to (almost) tempt armchair-bound ufologists to don their hiking boots. £4.00 for three issues from TLH, PO Box 13, Welshpool, Powys.

**S.P.R. Journal**, February 1985. No. 799. Michael Gross discusses Transcendent Psi and recommends experimental prayer. Ivor Grattan-Guinness asks 'Is Psi Intrinsically Non-Linguistic?'. I wouldn't know, but the articles by J.C. Jacdos, 'PK Experiments with a True and Pseudo Random Number Generator' and Carroll B Nash, 'Clairvoyant Determination of the Most Frequent of Five Cards' seem decidedly non-linguistic! Christopher Aldcroft asks 'Is the Hope Star and Browning Cross-Correspondence a prophecy of Auschwitz? - I doubt it. If the SPR Journal continues at this rate much longer the only readable parts will be the obituaries.

**Skeptical Enquirer**. Vol 9, no. 3. Spring 1985. Good combative stuff from CSICOP demolishing the Columbus polt., astrology, and every other fringe belief you can think of. Love it or hate it, it says where it stands and doesn't pull its punches. It is essential reading for any serious researcher, if only on a 'know thy enemy' basis. Sub. details from Michael Hutchinson, 10 Crescent View, Loughton, Essex.



Dear John,

I write to provide more information about the radiation readings in the Rendlesham Forest case, a subject of dispute between Willy Smith and Roger Sandell in *Magonia* 19 (pp.17-19). Roger Sandell is correct when he says that we cannot evaluate the significance of the radiation readings from the information given in Col. Halt's memo. The reasons are as follows.

To interpret a radiation reading, we need to know the type of radiation monitor used, and to have control readings taken at a site not visited by the UFO. We have neither.

Anyone who begins to investigate the radiation readings will soon find, as I did, that they are not what they seem. For a start, the figures are not quoted correctly. They should have been given in terms of dose rate, i.e. in milliroentgens per hour. Giving a reading in milliroentgens alone is as meaningless as saying that your speed on the motorway was 70 miles. A spokesman for the National Radiological Protection Board told me: "I tend to be suspicious of readings given by people who don't know how to quote them properly".

Bursts of radiation like those given in Halt's memo would be expected on a normal geiger counter from natural background sources, such as cosmic rays. From the tape recording of the event made on December 29th by Col. Halt, a copy of which I have, it is clear that the airmen were simply counting occasional bursts of radiation and ignoring the silences in between. At one stage Halt says of the geiger counter, "Hey, this is an awkward thing to use, isn't it?", which does not sound like the reaction of an experienced operator.

As for the reliability of Larry Warren (who has now dropped the pseudonym of Art Wallace), Walt Andrus of MUFON has said in a recent letter to Phil Klass: "Mr. Warren apparently enjoys basking in this

publicity because he tends to embellish his story each time that it is told. We arranged to have a voice stress analysis test conducted by the leading authority on this device, using the Cable News Network video-tape/audio as the medium for the test. Larry Warren failed the questions where he was describing the occupants, therefore MUFON has no further need to conduct a polygraph test."

Finally, Willy Smith tries to make the lighthouse go away by arguing about its flash rate. The fact is that the lighthouse is there. And we know that the airmen were looking at it on the night of December 29th. because the compass bearings taken by Col. Halt's men tell us. They did not recognise it then, so it would not be surprising if they had failed to recognise it previously.

Had a UFO been present as well as the lighthouse, the airmen should have seen two flashing objects, not one. Incidentally, the editing of the *Breakfast Time* film was done by the BBC producer. In addition to the zoom footage, the lighthouse is seen flashing over the shoulder of Vince Thirkettle while he is talking. This footage could not have been doctored in any way.

Yours sincerely, Ian Ridpath, Brentford.

Dear Michael Goss

I liked 'The Maniac on the Platform'. I used to lecture in 'underground London' for the City University - one evening was devoted to the pneumatic railways of Thomas Webster Rammell, including the Crystal Palace Pneumatic Railway. Having spent some time engaged in the search for the same, and having researched every piece of contemporary documentation I think I might claim to be an expert.

The facts are that a reasonably large experimental underground railway was constructed in Crystal Palace Park in 1864, and all trace of it subsequently expunged. The same company had previously constructed a smaller diameter line down High Holborn for parcels. When this was subsequently 'rediscovered' in the 1930's the 'train' of four trucks was discovered to have been run into the centre of the tunnel on abandonment. The trucks were extracted by being winched out, and one of them may now be seen in the Museum of London. It was inferred that the same company would adopt the same procedure at Crystal Palace, and the full-sized carriage still be there! We have failed to locate the tunnel so far.

On hearing of the Pamela Goodsell saga I phoned the police dealing with it, and of course she could not find the place again and apparently had started to shift



to an 'actually I'm psychic and saw it in a vision' position!

There was an excellent feature film in about 1975 starring Gordon Gostelow which was set in the abandoned British Museum station (which does indeed exist). Plot was that Victorian navvies (male and female) had been sealed into the station by an earth fall, but survived by cannibalism down to the present, by snatching the last passengers of the day from the Russell Square station platform, and dragging them back down the tunnel to a side branch to British Museum. The only thing they could say was 'Mind the Doors'. I've never felt quite the same about Russell Square since!

How about two maniacs with a rope stretched between them?

Yours Sincerely, Roger J. Morgan, London  
Subterranean Survey Association, London W8.

Dear John Rimmer,

I would like to comment on Michael Goss's article 'The Maniac on the Platform'. I am convinced that rumours do not stop at borders. I am offering the view that the London subway rumour of the Maniac could possibly find one of its origins in a similar psychosis which happened in Paris at the end of 1982. Perhaps British press accounts of the Parisian events may have helped to shape the London rumour which flourished on the perfect 'humus' formed by the intangible fears people entertain about the subway.

The Parisian psychosis of 'les pousseurs de metro' had enormous press coverage in France at the time. In fact, I consider this affair to be one of the most blatant uses of a press story for inducing xenophobic fears in the public.

Everything started when an old-age-pensioner was pushed under the oncoming train by a man of asiatic countenance. The French yellow-press made its headlines of the story for weeks afterwards, creating a psychosis amongst Parisian metro users who would carefull avoid standing near the platform edge.

When the 'pousseur' was caught, the xenophobic discourse found another impulse because the arrested man was a Laotian suffering from a mental aberration (he thought he was the reincarnation of Bruce Lee). The psychosis did not stop there because copycat 'pousseurs' took the relay, and the topic of 'gratuitous murder' began to appear more and more in the press.

The 'pousseur' fear is still rampant in the metro nowadays. The Paris subway is a city beneath the city in which com-

muters, tourists, buskers, pickpockets, beggars, muggers and police share the same territory. The security in the subway has been a major political issue and the 'pousseur' affair must also be seen as the orchestration by a certain section of the press of a collective fear to attack the government on the subject of the citizens' security.

Best Regards

Jean-Louis Brodu, Editor, Pogonip, Paris

Dear Editor,

In his article on the 'Maniac on the Platform', Michael Goss anticipates that the Maniac will shortly turn up in the press. In fact he seems to have already done so, since he was featured in the correspondence column of the *London Standard* recently. A reader told of how she had witnessed a woman trip over a tramp lying on the platform at Leicester Square station. A man intervened to prevent her from falling onto the line, and then started kicking the tramp, explaining to bystanders that "he's always doing this". This all seems unlikely (did no-one attempt to hand the tramp over to a London Transport employee?) but it could be true, in which case the tramp's assailant could have been someone who had heard the Platform Maniac rumour and thought he had actually come face to face with him.

Roger Sandell, Richmond, Surrey.

Dear John Rimmer

Hilary Evans ought to know better than to criticize statements which he attributes to me. I did not write that "There are no UFOs"; Hilary took that phrase out of a context in which it meant alien craft. What I did say was that it can be argued, indeed should be argued, that all UFOs might be IFOs. I accept Sach's definition of an IFO - "an object which, originally labeled as unidentified, has been recognised as a conventional object or a natural phenomenon". (The *UFO Encyclopedia*, p.157); this is not tautology.

I wrote what I 'really meant' and there was no justification for Hilary to suggest that I was being obtuse, or to claim that I indulged in trickery. Examination of the UFO evidence should lead a reasonable person to conclude that (alien) UFOs do not exist. It is not up to me to prove that alien craft are not visiting Earth; it is up to those who claim this is true to prove their claim. Because it cannot be disproved, the ETH is not a scientific hypothesis; the null hypothesis is scientific because it can be disproved by the production of unambiguous and undeniable evidence that even one UFO is an alien craft (although that would

not prove that all UFOs have the same explanation).

May I say that there is little difference between a 'presumption' (=assumption), an opinion (=estimation) and a hypothesis (= a supposition)? I claim the right to hold opinions, make assumptions and propose hypotheses. I deny a charge of insolence; all who accept esoteric theories are liable to lose the distinction between dreams and reality.

Steuart Campbell, Edinburgh.

Dear Editor,

While criticizing Kevin McClure's handling of Occam's Razor (*Magonia* 19), Steuart Campbell indulges in such uninformed statements as "everyone agrees (my emphasis) that there is no objective evidence" for psychic phenomena. Steuart is wrong all the way: a great number of them show their basic objectivity by leaving physical traces (like some UFOs). [1]

Similarly, to argue that all psychical researchers who claim positive results (and not all of them do) are either deluded or dishonest is so sweeping and unlikely a suggestion that it is perhaps hardly worthwhile to attempt to refute it.

Medical research and psychology, to name but two disciplines, could be similarly written off by the same criteria on the grounds that there "have been enough examples of both mistakes and fraud" to discredit the subjects; presumably even Steuart would be slightly hesitant in drawing such radical conclusions! Occam's trusy Razor has its uses, but I for one side with Bunge in preferring to be hairy and alive to being shorn to the skin and dead!

Manfred Cassirer, London NW6

[1] E.g., *Research in Parapsychology*, 1976, pp.11 ff.; *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. 49, no. 777, pp.875 ff.

Dear Sir,

We anomaly researchers have already learned to look to Brentford as a window area rich in raw phenomena: it is gratifying to find that indigenous investigators are correspondingly venturesome in their pioneering of new research techniques. Others concerned with river and lake phenomena will be anxious to learn further details of the 'discoventing' technique mentioned but not further described by Mr Rankin (*Magonia* 19, p.13, col.2, line 2).

I presume that the word was originally coined with UFOs of the discoid kind in mind, and only by extenstion has now been

applied to other aerial phenomena such as winged creatures rising from the Thames.

It is characteristic of Mr Rankin's inventiveness that he should recognise the potential of the punt as a floating observation base. Generations of Cambridge students have discovered that you can do things in punts which, though they can also be done in canoes, can be done so only at some personal risk. I hope that someone - London Weekend, maybe - has made a video record of Mr Rankin discopunting, so that the rest of us may profit from his ingenuity.

May I conclude by expressing the hope that your illustration reflects the present attitude towards the gryphon? I trust that Brentford will, in truth, make the creature welcome, keeping not only the myth but the creature itself alive, and not simply - as so many official bodies might do - tell Mr Rankin to stuff it.

Yours sincerely, Hilary Evans,  
Lewisham-by-the-Thames.

Dear John,

Some news on recent happenings in France which may be of interest to your readers. Ufologists are on holiday, and the UFOs too, it seems. No cases to investigate means that we are able to take time to clear up old cases. Michel Figuet is continuing his work on FRANCAT, separating IFOs from those which still deserve the label UFO. This will be published one day.

A number of international meetings are planned. Yves Bosson and Perry Petrakis (of OVNI Presence) are trying to arrange annual meetings between French and Italian ufologists on the model of the Anglo-French meetings; and there are hopes that in the future these can develop into a series of international meetings. One suggestion is a meeting in Paris, London or Brussels between ufologists from France, Britain and Northern Europe, and another in France, Italy or Spain for Southern Europe.

The Trans-en-Provence case is still under investigation. Further soil samples have been taken for analysis. We plan to publish a full report on Trans some day, but it will take several months to work out.

Some interesting new publications have appeared in France. The Brittany-based group C.U.B. have published a 50-page document which examines a local cultist group, SPIRALE, the leaders of which were active in the Cergy Pontoise abduction hoax. You can get this report for 35 francs from: Renaud Marhic, 89 rue de Siam, 29200 Brest, France.

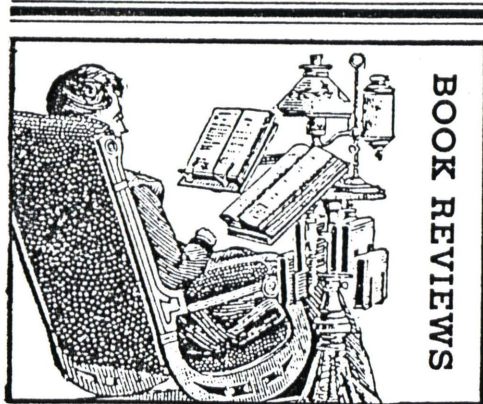
CIGU (Comite Ile de France des Groupements Ufologiques) has issued its second



**Annuaire**, with details of investigations, old cases with full references, etc. A very valuable work. 65 francs from Michel Coste, 18 rue Pierre Curie, 93170 Bagnolet.

Finally, the Presses Universitaires de France published in May a small book entitled *Les OVNI*, in its series 'Que-sais-je', by Jean-Pierre Troadec and Michel Dorier. This book seems to propound all the beliefs of the F.F.U. (Federation Francaise d'Ufologie) members, who belong very much in the old 'nuts-and-bolts' school of ufology. Many of us are amazed and disappointed by the apparent regression of Troadec's thought - is it the influence of members of the Federation? Yours, Thierry Pinvidic, Paris.

*In future issues of Magonia Thierry Pinvidic will be contributing an occasional column on current developments in French ufology. It is in France where perhaps some of the most radical thinking on ufology is now being done.*



**HARTE**, Jeremy (transl.) *The Dragon of Christchurch*. South West Antiquarian Soc. Occasional Papers 1. Available from 35a West Street, Abbotsbury, Nr. Weymouth, Dorset. £1.00 plus postage.

**LARKMAN**, Brian and Philip **HESELTON**. *Earth Mysteries; an exploratory introduction*. Northern Earth Mysteries Group, 1985. Available from Philip Heselton, 170 Victoria Avenue, Hull, HU5 3DY, £1.00 plus postage.

Small private publications form part of the life-blood of our areas or study. Valuable material, which would never see the light of day from any commercial publisher, pours forth from the presses, photocopies and inky duplicators of a hundred dedicated amateurs. The results vary from work which equals the quality of any professional pub-

lisher, to the frankly deplorable. Fortunately, neither of the works reviewed here falls into the latter category.

*The Dragon of Christchurch* is a neatly printed typescript, in *Magonia* format. It is a translation of the 12th century account of the travels of the canons of Laon through the West of England on a pilgrimage and fund-raising trip. It tells of the various portents, prodigies and miracles which attended on their journey; the high spot being, perhaps the destruction of the church at Christchurch by a fire breathing five headed dragon - in vengeance, it seems for the Dean relegating the image of the Virgin to a smaller altar. An interesting appendix records many other instances of feiry dragons, recorded in subsequent centuries. This helps to put in an historical context some of the incidents which, taken in isolation, have turned up as 'historical UFOs'. This booklet is the first in a series of occasional papers to be published by *Earth Giant*. I look forward to the other.

Rather more professionally produced, with colour cover, photographs and typesetting, *Earth Mysteries* is a brief summary of the many facets of this subject, with background on Alfred Watkins, the earth mysteries links with folklore and archaeology, as well as looking at the scientific (e.g. Dragon Project) and intuitive approaches to the study. The booklet concludes with a brief but comprehensive bibliography, listings of groups and magazines, and a glossary of EM jargon.

Both these booklets deserve your support. It is important to encourage publishing enterprise, especially at a difficult period like this. Even if the topics covered are not your main field of study, £1.00 isn't going to hurt too much - but don't forget to add postage, that's important to shoestring publishers. I know! J.R.

**NOYES**, Ralph. *A Secret Property*. Quartet Book, 1985. £7.95.

Some people in the Ufo field seem to have expected this book by a former head of the MOD's DS8 department to be a thinly disguised expose of the Government's interest in UFOs. They will have been disappointed. Admittedly, at times it seems like a roman à clef, with action set in a hybridised 'Bentbridge' air base, a dotty peer, the Bromley-based author of a book about George Adamski, and a number of other people and places we have come to know and love. Ralph Noyes obviously knows his ufology, and can use his knowledge of the subject, as well as his knowledge of the byways of Whitehall, to tell a good tale. And as a story it has a

pace and a style that holds your interest and keeps you reading.

It moves from Rendlesham to the Gulag, from Skylab to GEPAN, carrying the reader with it. It's a good politico-science-fiction novel, but it's not a subtle leak of the Government's position on UFOs.

But that, of course, might be the whole point! J.R.

**ROBINS**, Don. *Circles of Silence*. Souvenir Press, 1985. £14.95.

Don Robins presents here some of the first published reports on the Dragon Project, a programme of instrumented tests on various megalithic structures and sites in Britain to determine if there are any detectable forms of radiation which may be responsible for some of the alleged anomalous properties of these locations.

Robins's initial investigations at Rollright, in Oxfordshire recorded significant levels of ultrasonic radiation at sunrise, the level of which seemed to vary seasonally. Although some hints of an explanation for this phenomenon are given - properties of stone at a sub-atomic level are discussed - the author admits that this research is still at a very early stage.

Even so, these preliminary findings are interesting, and suggest lines for further work. Above all, the work of the Dragon Project is an attempt to move 'earth mysteries' research into the area of replicable experiment and away from the vague, intuitive approach that has accompanied it so far. This will no doubt occasion accusations of cold-hearted sterile ultra-rationalism from some EM enthusiasts; but such a dessicated attitude does not come across in Robins's deeply felt accounts of his dawn visits to Rollright. J.R.

**LEATHERDALE**, Clive. *Dracula: the novel and the legend*. Aquarian Press, 1985. £6.95.

This book takes a wide ranging look at Bram Stoker's great gothic masterpiece, putting it in the context not only of the legend of the vampire in Europe and the historical Vlad Dracul, but also attempts to analyse its place in its contemporary social setting.

Leatherdale charts the growth of the western European 'literary' vampire from its roots in the folk fears of the east; he demonstrates how the elegant, cloaked, sinisterly-polite Count of a hundred horror films grew out of the wild, foul-smelling, blood-soaked demon of peasant belief.

*Dracula* is a novel replete in symbolism, a rich source of material for the psychoanalyt-

ically inclined critic. Stoker's own life is examined (besides his famous vampire work, Stoker also wrote what may be perhaps the most boring book - certainly the most boringly titled - of all time: *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland*). Leatherdale suggests parallels between the physical vampirism of *Dracula*, and the psychological vampirism of Stoker's employer for many years, the actor Henry Irving, and in his examination of the psychoanalysis of the novel he reveals how much of Stoker's private life found expression. He examines, too, the overt sexual symbolism in *Dracula*, and the implicit sexual vampirism between the 'good' characters - Harker, van Helsing, Westenra, etc.

Leatherdale also looks at political messages which have been overlaid on the *Dracula* story, and here a curious contradiction emerges. By different critics, the vampire has been seen both as a symbol of oppression ('bloodsucking capitalists', etc), and as a symbol of earlier, feudal systems which have been vanquished by the industrial, rationalist, capitalist values of the 'heroes' of the story. This echoes a similar dichotomy in the psychoanalytical and sexual aspects, where *Dracula* has been interpreted as both a symbol of male domination of female values, and yet has also received feminist interpretations as a figure which liberates the repressed sexuality of his 'victims'.

It is perhaps, the dynamism of these contrasting interpretations which have given *Dracula* the continuing power it has demonstrated to readers for eight decades. J.R.

**HAYWARD**, Jeremy W. *Perceiving Ordinary Magic: science and intuitive wisdom*. Shambhala, Boulder and London, 1985. Distributed in the U.K. by Routledge Kegan Paul, £10.95.

This work is inspired by the Buddhist tradition and is concerned with perception and meditation. The author discusses how the traditional practices of meditation, involving the concepts of awareness and mindfulness can be integrated with the ideas and insights of modern science.

We are encouraged to use the techniques of meditation and the discoveries of science to "... uplift our own lives and those of others and discover our unconditioned nature which brings dignity and goodness."

These days there are many books on the same general theme as this one, but unlike most of them this is written by someone who actually knows something about science and this makes it worth reading. As for the value of the meditational techniques described, this can be assessed only by trying them oneself. J.H.



MITCHELL, Janet Lee. *Out of the Body Experiences*. Turnstone Press, Wellingborough. 1985. £5.95.

Ingo Swann claims to be able to leave his body at will and has submitted himself to laboratory experiments designed to investigate this claim, which have been conducted by the American Society for Psychical Research. Dr. Mitchell was so impressed by Swann that she was inspired to write this book.

The book discusses out-of-the-body (OOBE) experiences and similar phenomena both inside and outside the laboratory. Those who are familiar with the subject of OOBEs will find little that is new or surprising. Those who would like a reasonable concise introduction to the subject will find this book useful as it covers so many different aspects with some brevity. However, those readers who like to see such matters treated objectively will be irritated by the author's easy acceptance of the notion that people who have OOBEs really do leave their bodies, even though she has to admit that the results of experiments which attempt to prove this are certainly not conclusive. J.H.

KOSSLYN, Stephen Michael. *Ghosts in the Mind's Machine: creating and using images in the brain*. W.W.Norton, 1985. £9.95.

This book is an account of recent research into mental imagery. It describes various experiments which have been devised to investigate ways in which people create and manipulate mental images.

Such investigations cannot be carried out by studying the brain itself, but by studying the functioning of the brain. To this end experiments are carried out in which subjects are asked to view various images and then are asked questions designed to test their powers of mental imagery. Some of the experiments also explore the connections between mental images and the words which are used to describe the objects being visualised. Although most of the experiments described are quite simple, the experimenters have taken precautions to ensure that subjects do not 'second guess' them and fake the 'right' answers just to please them. The results make it possible for a theory to be constructed of how the brain functions and to give us some insights into the processes involved in the construction and use of mental images.

A more indirect form of investigation described in this book is the devising of computer programs which are capable of identifying images. Experience with such programs leads to results which suggest useful ideas for further experiments on human subjects.

The subject of perception and mental

imagery is, or should be, of great interest to all those who are interested in reports of UFOs or other strange sights, and this book provides plenty of information to inspire the serious researcher into such phenomena, although I must emphasise that it deals almost exclusively with normal imagery and not hallucinations and other unusual experiences.

My only quibble is with the philosophising in which the author indulges, where he asserts that new theories of mental functioning have solved the mind-body problem. This problem actually has very little to do with the details of brain functioning, and this is why it has proved to be so intractable. J.H.

RANDLES, Jenny, and Peter WARRINGTON. *Science and the UFOs*. Blackwell, Oxford, 1985. Illus. £12.50.

Ufologists of many persuasions, from hardcore ETH to the fringes of 'New Ufology' (how dated that appellation now seems) have been united by a feeling that whatever the solution to the UFO enigma might be - spaceships, paranormal events, some facet of radical misperception - there must be something in the UFO phenomenon that should provoke the interest of 'mainstream', 'establishment' science. "Even if you think we're all nutters," we say in effect to the scientists, "we're at least uncovering some sort of phenomena, aren't you interested in it?" And with one or two exceptions, largely from the fields of behavioural and social science, the answer has been "Not a lot!" In this book Jenny Randles and Peter Warrington make another attempt to take science by the scruff of the neck, rub its nose into the UFO evidence, and hope it takes notice.

The book opens with chapters which summarise the history of the flawed science of ufology. They outline the ongoing shambles of governmental UFO investigation (some of the comments made by US Government officials in the forties and fifties are hair-raisingly irresponsible in retrospect), and are only too well aware of the failures of 'enthusiast' ufology, and the damaging effect of ETH domination of ufological thought.

The second part of the book reviews current research within that 'enthusiast' field. The authors demonstrate an excellent understanding of the problems of radical misperception within a falsely constructed frame of reference, and what this means for the investigator. They present a detailed analysis of a series of extraordinary sightings in Hastings in 1981 which demonstrate the problems involved in assessing even the most unequivocal eyewitness testimony. Yet unlike some other writers who have

attempted to stimulate scientific interest in ufology, the authors do not attempt to sweep under the carpet some of the more 'embarrassing' data. The abduction, contactee and 'psychic' cases are faced up to, and put squarely into a psycho-sociological context, and the challenge to conventional science is clearly stated: "There can be no doubt that the CE4 [abduction/contact cases] represents a strange part of human experience, a chapter so strange that it is difficult to justify its continued neglect by social scientists."

The core of the book is in the final chapters, 'The Future'. Here the authors attempt to map out paths for future study. Firstly the pitfalls of media coverage are accurately charted, and it is interesting to read of some of the backstage manoeuvrings behind news coverage of Rendlesham. The authors' estimation here of the significance of that case is considerably more restrained than that which has appeared elsewhere. In fact there is little stated here that this reviewer (or the reviewer of Sky Crash) would disagree with. The authors are also prepared to take a critical look at some of the recent panaceas which have appeared on the UFO scene. Regression hypnosis, birth trauma, and earthlights are all looked at critically, and their strengths and weaknesses accurately defined.

In conclusion, the authors examine what the store of UFO data has to offer to each field of science, from astronomy to sociology, from geology to psychology. They make the point convincingly that this data is of importance and does have relevance to a wide range of scientific disciplines. But will the scientists working within those disciplines be prepared to accept the data which ufologists are offering them? Probably not, yet. The negative image of ufology will take many years to erode. This book is an excellent attempt at hastening that process, and my only cavil is that the outrageous price (for a 200-page volume) will limit its circulation. Perhaps the publishers thought that only expensive books are taken seriously by scientists? Unfortunately, they may be right. J.R.

RADNER, Daisie and Michael. *Science and Unreason*. Wadsworth (Ca.), 1982.

The authors examine a number of subjects on the fringes of science, and condemn most unorthodox views as pseudo-science. The hallmarks of 'crank' pseudo-science are said to include: appeal to outdated scientific notions, looking for mysteries rather than trying to solve them, the taking of ancient myths as historical records, the piling up

of bits of evidence for evidence's sake, the use of irrefutable arguments, appeals to spurious similarity, 'explanation' by scenario, research by seeking out hidden meanings in the statements of others, and refusal to revise in the light of criticism.

The authors argue that the gathering of facts without an encompassing theory does not constitute science, and that parapsychology, for example, will never advance beyond the fact-gathering stage, and that no 'sufficient conditions' have been found.

The authors however use an omnibus approach themselves, lumping von Daniken, creationism, biorhythms, etc. together. Nor do they fully separate possible anomalous facts and experiences from pseudo-scientific explanatory systems. P.R.

LESTER, Paul. *The Great Sea Serpent Controversy: a cultural study*. Protean Publications, 1984. [Available from Protean Publications, Flat 4, 34 Summerfield Crescent, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 0ER]. 25pp. £1.25

In this little pamphlet Lester gives a brief summary of the history of interest in the sea-serpent, and its emergence from the occupational folklore of sailors, fishermen and whalers, to a major controversy of the nineteenth century. To that era 'the great unknown' suggested science's incomprehension before the mysteries of nature and their defiance of scientific pretensions; as also it symbolised the untamed natural realm beyond the borders of civilization. It was perhaps the Beast from the Waters of Revelations. In his final paragraph Lester suggests that if the sea-serpent and sasquatch come from the pre-historic past, UFOs symbolise a post-historic future.

BILLIG, Otto. *Flying Saucers: magic in the skies, a psychohistory*. Schenkman, Cambridge (Mass.), 1982.

Discounting any competence to discuss the 5-10% 'unidentifieds', Billig examines the 90% IFOs, asking what psychological and sociological reasons cause people to interpret lights in the sky as alien spaceships.

He argues that close encounter cases occur in situations of marginality and sensory deprivation, and draws interesting parallels with hypnagogic states, Australian shamanic encounters as well as with fairy-stories. A detailed examination is made of the Kentucky abduction, illustrating the growing aura of the supernatural surrounding such abductees and how they can easily become contactees, delivering the message of the aliens. This abduction took place near a gate, and Billig points out that "folklore invests road crossings



gates and doors with unusual powers, as they symbolise the boundary between everyday life and the foreign world."

At a sociological level Billig outlines the history of lights in the sky, and comes to a similar conclusion to me, that stories of UFOs abound at times of vague, poorly defined crisis, but decrease in times of concrete, sharply outlined crisis. Alas, his view of history is frequently clichéd, and his knowledge of ufology superficial to put it mildly. UFOs may be perceived as "saviours from the skies" which will rescue us from our desperate selfhood, but equally they are often themselves seen as engines of menace. It is certainly misleading to talk of ufology in terms of cults and to raise the spectre of Jonestown.

This is a short book, much of it is padding and unable to sustain a poorly defined argument. Billig does not appear to be aware of how much of his argument is part of the current ufological discourse (though to be fair not in the United States), and many of his points have been made much better by ufologists themselves, including many writers in Magonia. P.R.

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WALLIS, Roy (Ed.) *Millennialism and Charisma*. Belfast, Queens University Press, 1982.

A selection of papers dealing principally with the role of charismatic leadership in new religious movements. Robert Balch, in his study of 'Bo and Peep' (Marshall Herff Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Nettles) a middle-aged couple who claimed to be the two witnesses of Revelation, is concerned to show the effects of lifestyle collapse on the genesis of messianic impulses. Comparisons are made with reactive schizophrenia, generated by the rapid collapse of the sufferer's social and subjective worlds leading to reality collapse, and with shamanism and religious conversion. Herff's collapse led to his meeting with Bonnie and his transition from an amused spectator of her esoteric group, to its messianic leader.

Werner Erhart, founder of EST also came upon his 'solution' in a sudden vision, while out driving. Erhart used his charismatic authority to build a totally 'this worldly' ideology based, it would appear, on the usages of high pressure salesmanship.

Ray Wallis himself shows how the charismatic authority of 'Moses' David Berg, leader of the Children of God, later known as the Family of Love, allowed him to divert his originally moralistic Bible-fundamentalist sect into an antinomian cult in which the dictates of the leader are always contradictory and changing, and in which female members were obliged to offer sexual favours to recruit new members.

David Taylor in a study of a local group of the Unification Church describes techniques of recruitment, and rejects easy analysis in terms of brainwashing.

Peter Smith's contribution on the millenarian origins of the Bahai'i faith contains much which illuminates the present situation in Iran, where a traditional milieu of the holy man who is in contact with the hidden Imam (and may even be the Imam) holds sway. If cultic leaders obtain their revelation when their personal reality is under strain, then much the same may happen to societies under the strain of encounter with alien cultures, such as mid-nineteenth century Iran, or Melanesia, home of the Madang, creators of the Cargo Cults discussed by Peter Lawrence. Lawrence relates both Madang cargoism and medieval European chialism to different concepts of time: cyclic and ahistoric to the Madang, linear and historic to the Europeans.

As with most symposia there are the problems of differing treatments and some lack of continuity. It is rather a pity that some of the authors of the pieces on American cults did not give as much exposition of background as Smith did on Bahai'i and Babism. Thus Balch in his study of Bo and Peep did not note that the cult was launched at a time of major public interest in ufology in the USA, which contributed greatly to its success.

However, the stress on the relationship between individual psychology and sociology is good, avoiding reductionism to either stream. The psychology of one group is, however, neglected - that of the ubiquitous 'participant observers' themselves. Do they feel no response to the beliefs of those with whom they must be pretty closely involved? Are they never converted, repelled, amused, or at least given serious cause to doubt their own perceptions? And if not, is that not perhaps a cause for concern in itself? P.R.

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COLLINS, H.M. (Ed.) *Sociology of Scientific Knowledge; a sourcebook*. Bath University Press, 1982.

A selection of papers illustrating the 'strong programme' of the sociology of scientific knowledge, in which positivist distinctions between science and pseudoscience are ignored. Papers by Farley and Gieson on the Pasteur-Pouchet debate on spontaneous generation, Woolgar on the confused accounts of the discovery of pulsars, Shapin on phrenology in Edinburgh, Collins and Pinch on the strategies by which parapsychologists and their critics seek to gain or refuse its recognition as a science, and Westrum on the scientific reception of meteorites should all be of interest to Magonia readers. P.R.

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